Books.

On the Amendment of the Law and Practice of Letters Patent for Inventions. By Thomas Webster, Esq., M.A., F.R.S., Barrister-at-Law, author of "The Law and Practice and Reports of Patents for Inventions." London: Chapman and Hall. 1851.

This is a very timely review of the subject of patent law amendment, with various useful suggestions, and it would be well if our legislators, previous to next session, would get at the pith of this important question by a careful perusal of some such easily-mastered outline of the whole subject.

As it respects poor inventors, this writer remarks on the injustice of the present system, that "It has been asserted that there are no inventions worth prosecuting which do not find some person to take them up and supply the requisite capital: this, however, is denied by others of great experience; but this is altogether foreign to the real question—namely, the inability of the poor inventor to obtain protection, and the obstruction to the course of invention from the consciousness of inability to obtain a patent except with the assistance of a capitalist, who may impose his own terms. If the success of a poor inventor, who may fortunately have met with a liberal capitalist, or who may have obtained an independence by means of his invention, notwithstanding numerous disadvantages, be an incentive to others, the struggle which he endured is not without its warnings, and the testimony of masters who have been in the habit of making liberal arrangements respecting the inventions of persons in their employ is conclusive as to the effect of the present system in repressing invention.

The knowledge on the part of the workman that the saving out of his ordinary earnings, accumulated during a very short time, would be sufficient to enable him to create property in an invention the result of his ingenuity, could not fail to stimulate his exertions and to encourage his endeavours after advancement, while the consciousness of utter inability to effect this under the present system cannot fail to check and suppress such exertions."

The working of "The Protection of Inventions Act" of the present year, whereby provisional protection is given to patentable inventions, has already suggested some considerations of importance, it appears. Numerous inventors have availed themselves of its provisions, and the public exhibition they have thereby been enabled to make of their inventions to persons of skill, knowledge, and capital, without prejudice to the validity of letters patent thereafter granted, during the term of such provisional protection, has shown to many of such exhibitors that their projects are neither new nor practicable, and thus prevented the expenditure of money in obtaining legal rights which would have been altogether invalid. The experience of the working of that Act, as remarked by the present author, leads to the conclusion that public exhibition of matured inventions, coupled with provisional protection for a limited time, will effect much towards checking the creation of invalid legal rights, and promoting the real interests of inventors and the progress of invention; and that if the provisions of that Act were extended, so as to allow of the public use of the invention during that limited period, the most beneficial consequences would result.

The Family Friend. Vol. IV. London: Houlston and Stoneman, 1851.

This volume contains the same amount of pleasant and instructive reading as those which have preceded it, and has our warm approval.

Surveyorships.—The corporation of Reading have affixed their common seal to the appointment of Mr. Francis Hawkes, jun., architect, as borough surveyor.——Fifteen of the candidates for the surveyorship of Blackburn have been selected for final decision, as "the more eligible of the candidates." Five of the applicants for the assistant surveyorship have also been selected.

Miscellanea.

Guides in the Great Exhibition.—The other day a juror, wishing to find a particular class in the Great Exhibition, politely asked, as he passed, one of two persons who sat at the "Guides' Desk" in the south transept, where it was. The person addressed replied shortly, he "did'nt know." Not know, said the juror? Upon which the second, in a very insolent tone, exclaimed, "We provide guides for those who want them, and anything we tell you here must be paid for," with other observations of equally improper character. The juror obtained their names and promised to report them to the Executive, which we trust he will do, as we are satisfied they would not permit such conduct to be exhibited with impunity. We pity the simple countryman or countrywoman committed to the gentle mercies of such fellows as these. We should like to hear Lord Granville talk to them.

State of the Drainage in Lambeth.—A correspondent, "T. A. C.," complains of the injury he and his family are suffering in their health from the improper state of the drains in Holland-street. The landlord's agent, he states, was willing to provide a proper trap if ordered by the Sanitary Board to do so. Our correspondent wrote, as he informs us, to the Board, and was called on by some one who seemed to know nothing about it—could not tell what a trap to a drain was, and thought an untrapped drain all right and proper. The matter is still *in statu quo*, and our correspondent desires to know what next to do. We would suggest his application to the Central Board of Health.

Rowley Regis.—The nailers' strike still continues. A correspondent of the *Birmingham Journal* denies that the men have demanded a higher rate of wages. "The simple facts," he says, "are that some of the Dudley masters having commenced paying their men by a list made in 1842, which was a reduction of from 10 to 25 per cent. upon the list they had been paid by up to that time (the 12th of July last), other masters attempted a 10 per cent. reduction on all other sorts of forged nails they bought, and the nailers thinking that if those masters were allowed to pay their men at that price other masters would soon follow them, considered it their duty to commence a general strike. Although the strike was not general at first, it every day becomes more general."

Institute of British Architects.—On the 18th was held the concluding conversazione at the Institute of Architects, when Herr Zanth, honorary member, explained a series of drawings of the Wilhelma, a country seat of the King of Wurtemberg, which he has recently erected. It is in the Arabian style. The drawings were very interesting examples of minute finishing. At the same meeting, Herr Jong exhibited a series of designs for the restoration of one of the Rhine Castles. The execution of the design was prevented by a death, and we will not say we are sorry for it.

Division of Trades.—Sir,—I am glad to see your remarks are often as "bread thrown upon the waters." Great pleasure must be given to many by finding architects dividing their estimates.* The mason, the carpenter, the bricklayer, the plumber, &c. *should* contract for their several trades' work, and the business will be done in a workmanlike manner, overlooked by the *best judges* of each trade, the several masters.—[]

Fall of Buildings.—"For some time past," says the *Norfolk Chronicle*, "a number of men have been employed in repairing the church of St. Martin's, at Palace. A great deal of work in the way of repairs, both interior and exterior, had been done up to Saturday last, when the men observed that one of the pillars of an arch was giving way. They therefore began to prop it up, but found that its fall was inevitable. The men, sixteen in number, had scarcely time to rush out of the building when the pillar and the greater part of the arch which it supported fell, bringing with it the roof of the chancel, and the roof forcing out the walls on one side, the whole fell with a great crash. The church is now a mass of ruins."——On the day previous, at Thetford, the steeple of St. Cuthbert's church fell on the roof of the building, carrying away one of the arches and destroying the organ. The church is very old, and it is feared has been rendered unsafe by the concussion. It is built of flint and freestone, and has been frequently repaired.

Queenstown Harbour.—The screw-pile lighthouse now building on the Spit Bank, by the Messrs. Mitchell, from the designs of Mr. George Halpin, engineer to the Commissioners of Irish Lights, is progressing rapidly. The piles are all fixed, reaching above high water, and upon them the top pillars are now being placed which are to support the lightkeeper's dwelling, at an elevation of 17 feet above high water. It is expected that the building will be completed before November.

Gutta Percha Types.—Seeing in a late number of The Builder that notice is made of gutta percha stereotypes as well as gutta percha matrices, and that they are printing (?) with the same at the Great Exhibition, I beg to state that the use of gutta percha for block or type printing is the subject of a patent of mine, dated 12th May, 1846. I have no objection to the parties making use of the invention at the Great Exhibition, but beg to state that I shall not suffer any portion that may infringe my patent to be used by any person or in any way without my permission.

R. W. Sievier.

* Vide contracts for St. George's Hall, Bradford.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

"*Inventor.*"—We have received five letters this week from poor inventors seeking assistance. It is out of our power to advise.

"*Sero as.*"—We must avoid theological controversy. The spirit shown by some of the writers who have addressed us on this subject would light fresh fires in purified Smithfield.

"S. W." (we are sorry that we cannot advise), "P. D." (ditto), "A. A." (ditto), "J. P." "J. M." "Mr G." "P. C." "E. F." "W. M." "P. P." "R. J." "G. W. C." (declined with thanks), "A. P." (ditto), "C. B. A." (ditto), "C. S." "T. H. H." "W. E. B." Blisworth, "J. H." (thanks), "W. H. B." "C. D." Denton (the "Walhalla" named was of a very different character and need not be sought for), "E. and H." "W. A." "W. T." "G. H." "E. H." (shall hear from us), "Tabitha" (shall appear), "W. A." (ditto), "A Constant Reader."

ADVERTISEMENTS.

SYRIAN LADIES and MUSICIANS.—The first Syrian performers who have appeared in London (The Syro Lebanon Company), recently arrived from Aleppo, now illustrate their Manners, Customs, Costumes, and Vocal and Instrumental Music, and recite tales from the Arabian Nights, at the LARGE ORIGINAL DIORAMA of the HOLY LAND, Egyptian Hall, daily, at 3 and 8. Admission, 1s; Stalls 3s; reserved 5s. EGYPTIAN HALL, Piccadilly.

COLOSSEUM.—Change of Panoramas.—The original and extraordinary PANORAMA of LISBON, painted by Mr. Parris, will be EXHIBITED with the other splendid features of this Establishment, recently remodelled, daily from half-past Ten till Five. The grand PANORAMA of PARIS by NIGHT, by Dawson and Son, from Seven till half-past Ten. The most admired music from Two till Five, and during the evening, when the conservatories, saloons, &c., are brilliantly illuminated. Admission, day or evening, 1s; children and schools half-price. CYCLORAMA, Albany-street, admission 1s. A grand moving Panorama of Lisbon and the Earthquake in 1755 is exhibited daily at One and Three, and in the evening at half-past Seven and Nine o'clock. Illustrated by appropriate music on the two grand Apollonicons. Children and schools half-price.

THE GREAT EXHIBITION and the ROYAL POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTION.—All the most interesting objects at the Great Exhibition will, in turn, be lectured on at the Royal Polytechnic Institution.—The present features are by J. H. Pepper, Esq., on the Minerals and Base Metals in the Great Exhibition, and their connection with the possibility of Transmutation. Popular Lecture by Dr. Bachhoffner on the recent Total Eclipse of the Sun, with splendid Diagrams, showing the appearances which actually occurred on the line of Totality.—The great chemistry of Cooking by Gas explained.—A Lecture on the History of the Harp, by Frederick Chatterton, Esq., with Vocal Illustrations.—Two series of splendid Dissolving Views.—Diver and Diving Bell, &c., &c.—Admission, 1s; Schools, Half-price. Open daily from half-past ten till five, and every evening from seven till half-past ten.

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Manufacturers of Circular and Mill Saws, Improved cast steel Files, for the use of engineers and machinists; patent tempered machine knives and cutters, manufactured for planing and grooving wood, for cutting paper, iron, stone, leather, &c., made to any pattern or dimensions with the utmost exactness. Warranted to work with a harder and sharper edge than any other mode of tempering.—Inventors of recommended that mode for taps, screw-nuts, &c.—Manufacturers of railway springs, leather, plush, and cast steel, &c. &c.

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Worcester, June, 1851.

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